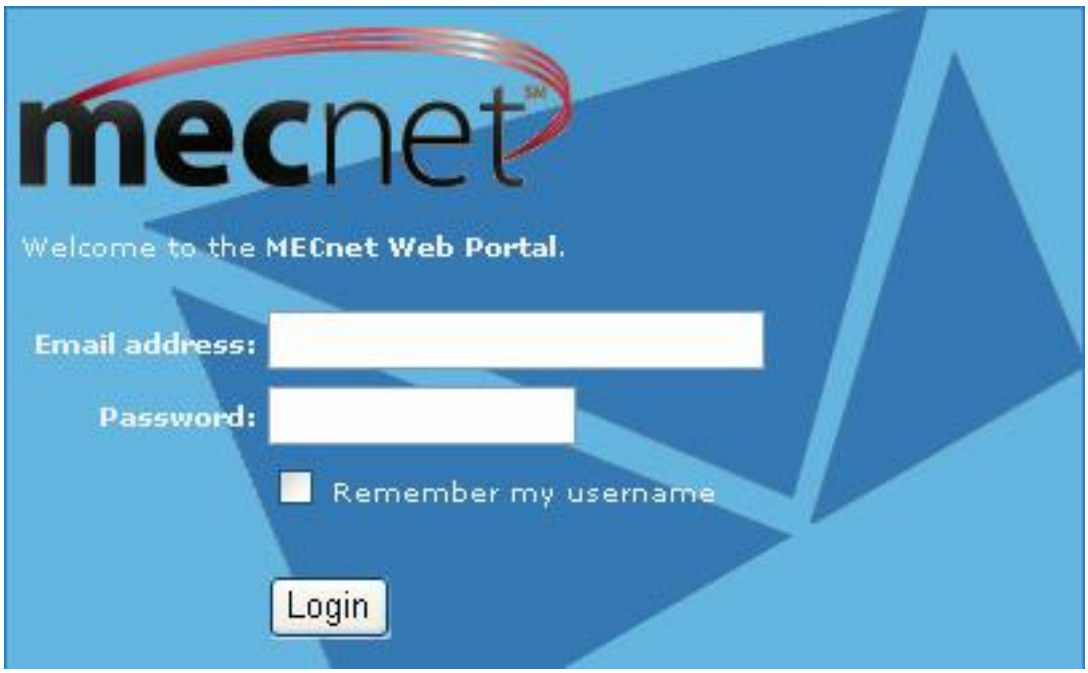
DRAFT

User's Manual

MECnet Portal: Using Web-Based Email



mecnet
Connecting people, places and ideas.

MECnet is a division of Merrimack Education Center, a non-profit organization

- To access your mail, use this address: **portal.<*domain name*>**
- Enter your *email* address and password.
- Navigation is controlled using the tabs on the left-hand side of the screen. **(The browser buttons should not be used for navigation.)**

Using the Portal

- **Default View (Today)**
  In the default view, you can see your weekly calendar, tasks you need to complete, and your email messages.
- **Inbox**
  This is the default location for all your email.
- **New Mail**
  Compose and send mail from this location.
- **Calendar**
  Your virtual calendar.
- **Messenger**
  For sending *Instant Messenger* style messages to others using the MECnet Portal. Requires that you invite contacts or reply to an invitation.
- **Bookmarks**
  Store bookmarks here and they will be available from any computer with an Internet connection.
- **File Storage**
  Functions as you virtual hard drive. You can upload files here and then download them from any computer with an Internet connection.

Additional Features

- **Configuration Tab**
  Allows you to edit some of the default settings. It also provides you with the ability to create signature files and control the look and feel of your MECnet Portal Account.
- **Help**
  Help is always available using the help button.
- **EZpost**
  MECnet's online homework posting application.
- **MCAS Test Creator**
  MECnet's easy to use test creator based upon MCAS questions.

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Introduction

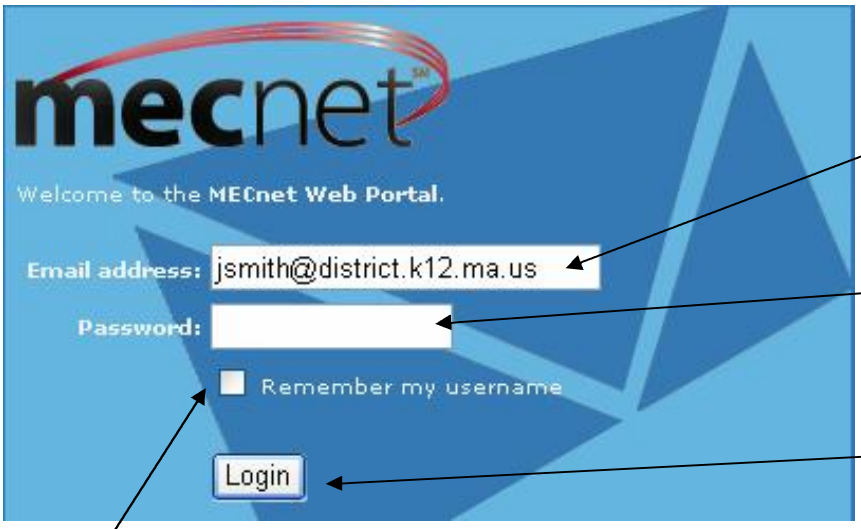
Welcome to MECnet's Portal! This user guide is designed to answer questions you may have as you transition to this new interface. Please contact our Helpdesk if you have any additional questions not covered here. You can reach our HelpDesk by email at support@mecnet.net or by phone at: 978.262.4000, option 1.

We realize you may not read this manual cover to cover, so we would like to bring your attention to a few important issues.

- We recommend using Internet Explorer 5 (or higher) on a PC platform and Netscape 6.0 on the Mac (some features may not function with an Explorer/Mac combination).
- Please be sure to use the navigation buttons on the left hand side of your screen and not your browser buttons.
- If your account is inactive for 6 months an email message is sent to the district contact, if no action is taken, the account is automatically deleted after 12 months of inactivity.
- Please be sure to use the 'Logout' button as opposed to exiting/closing your browser.

Using the Portal

The Portal URL and your login information is available from your District's Technical Support Department.



1. Enter your complete email address; i.e. jsmith@district.k12.ma.us

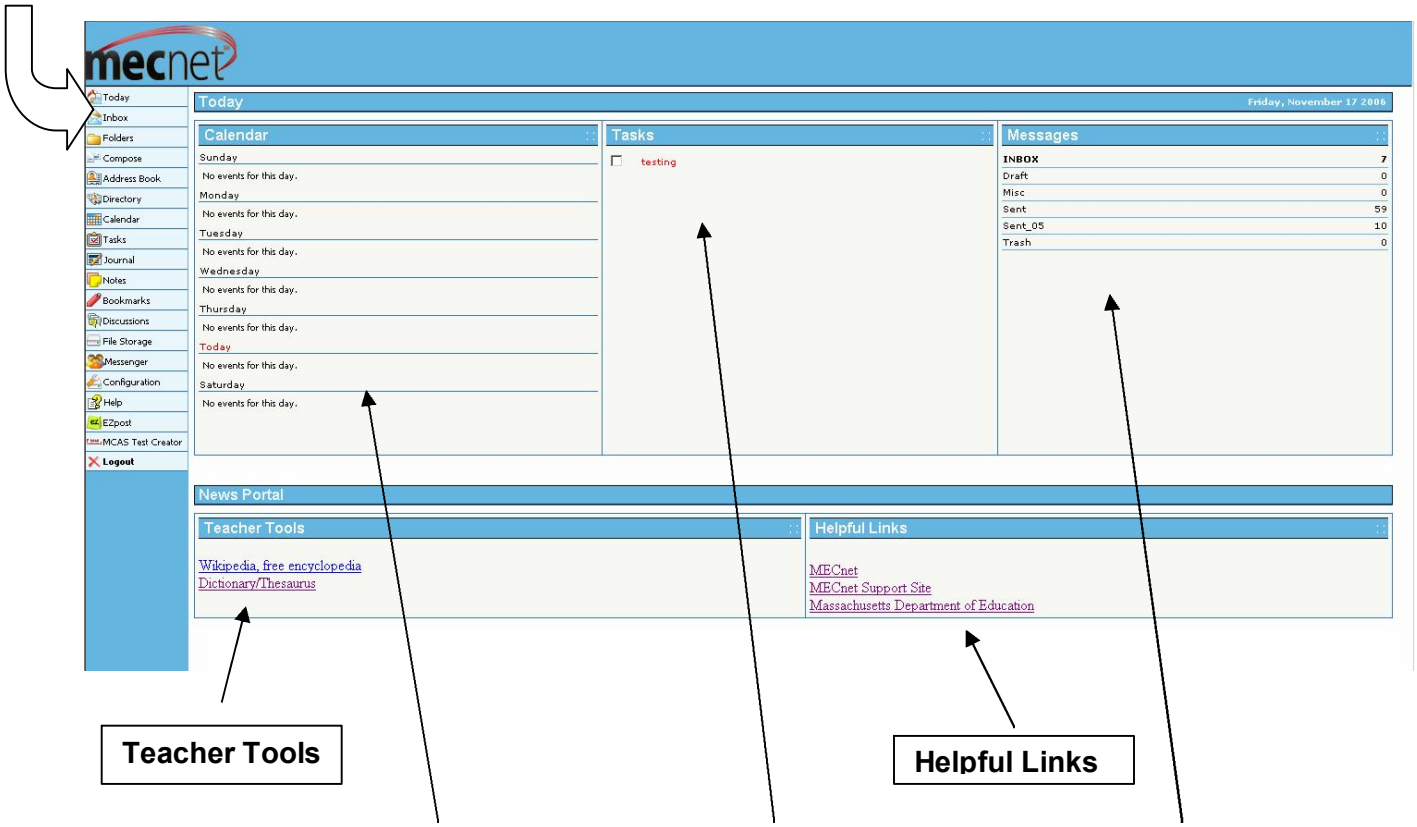
2. Enter your password

3. Click to log in

TIP: Click here to avoid typing in your username every time you log in. (NOTE: you must have the 'accept cookies' feature enabled on you browser for this feature to function properly).

The Today Tab

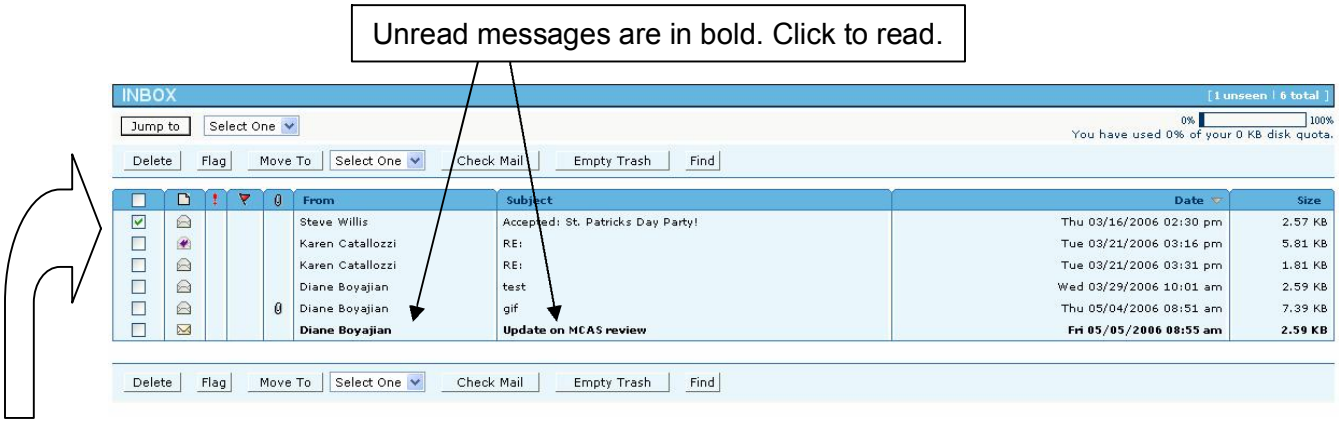
The **Today** Screen is the default view. On the left you will see all your navigation tabs.
NOTE: To avoid unexpected problems, use these navigation tabs and not your browser buttons.



On the right, you will see your **Calendar** for the week**, Tasks** to be completed and **Messages** (a summary of your email folders with unread messages in bold)

The Inbox Tab

This is the default folder for all your email. After reading an email you have several options, i.e. respond to it, move it to another folder, delete it, etc.



TIP: You may select more than one email at a time.

In order to **Delete**, **Flag**, or **Move** messages, you must first select the message using the small check box. In the view above, only the first message is selected. If you now click **Delete**, only the selected message will be deleted. (Clicking on 'Delete' immediately deletes the message. A deleted message is gone forever; it is not available in the Trash folder.)

To move an email to another folder:

- Be sure the message you want to move is selected (a check mark appears in the check box)
- Select a folder from the drop down menu located to the right of the **Move To** button
- Click on the **Move To** button.

TIP: Keep an eye on your disk quota. If this goes over 75%, you should empty your trash or delete some of your old files. E-mails in your Inbox are not part of this disk quota. Messages in the Inbox remain on the mail server on which your account is hosted so you may use other programs, such as Outlook, to view your e-mail.

The Folders Tab

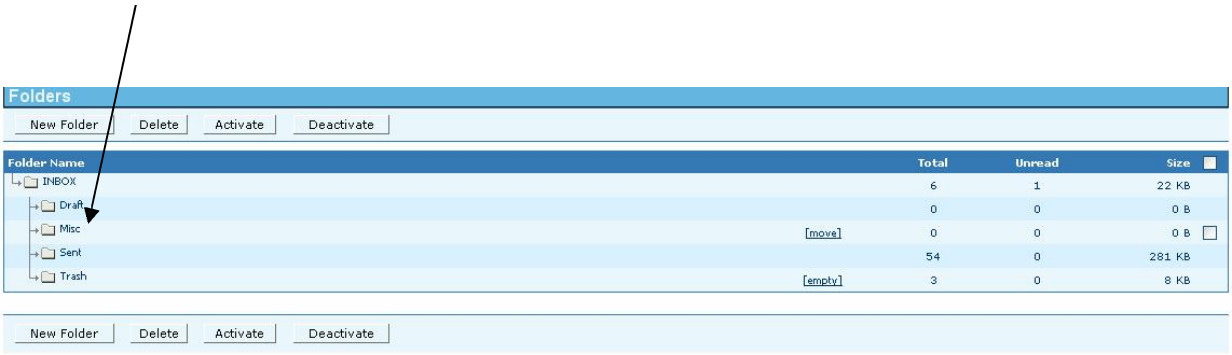
This is where you will create folders to help with organization of your email messages. Creating folders to organize your email will save you a great deal of time and it's easy to do. Please note that mail moved out of the Inbox will no longer be hosted on the mail server and therefore not available to other SMTP/POP3 clients (i.e. Outlook).

By default, 4 folders have been created for you:

INBOX (a top level folder)
-Sent
-Draft
-Trash } ***Subfolders***

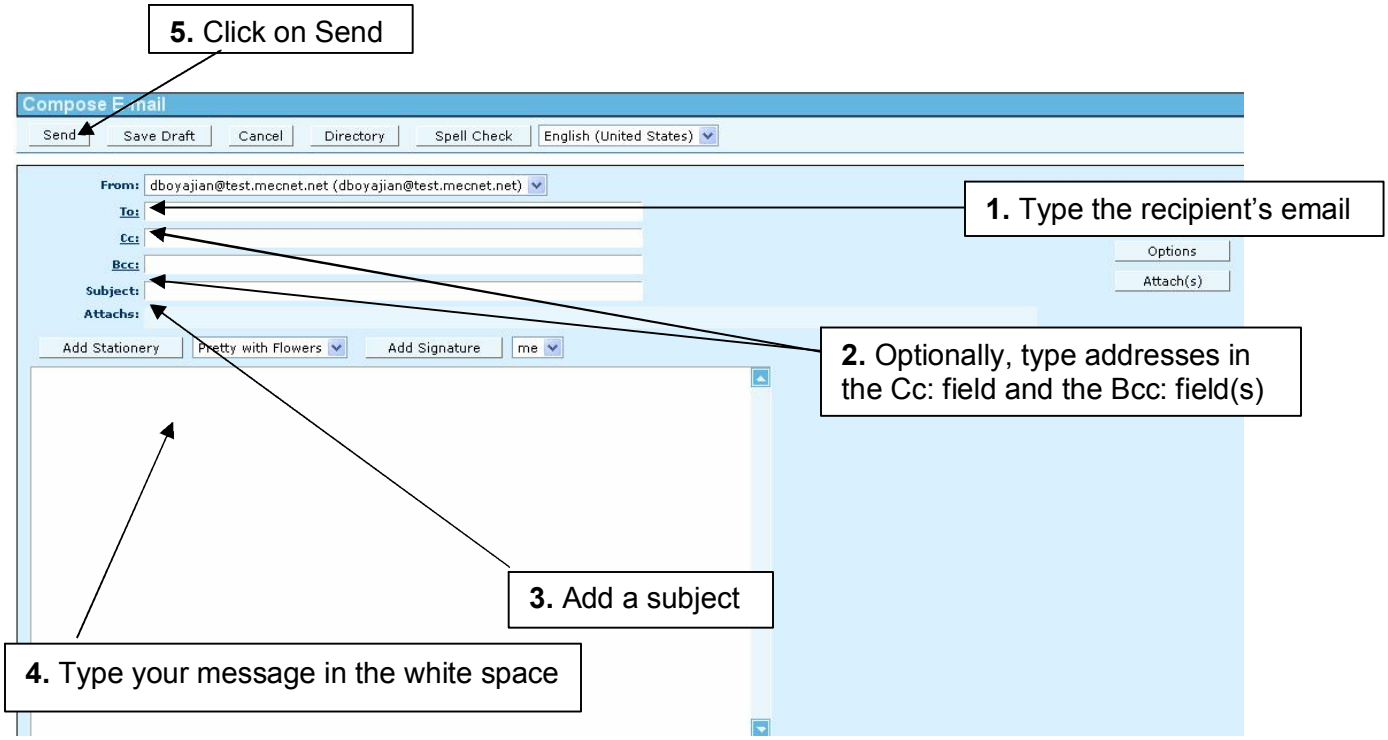
(These folders cannot be deleted)

To create additional folders, click on New Folder and type a name. New folders will be created as subfolders of the INBOX (i.e., 'Misc.')



The Compose Tab

Follow the steps below to create and send email messages.

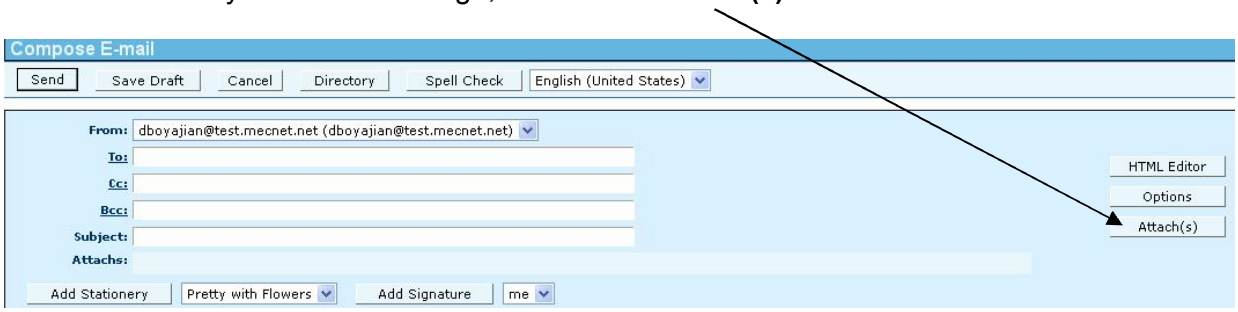


After you click on the Send button, a confirmation message will appear to indicate your email has been successfully sent. If you want to disable this option, see the **'Configuration Tab'** section of this manual.

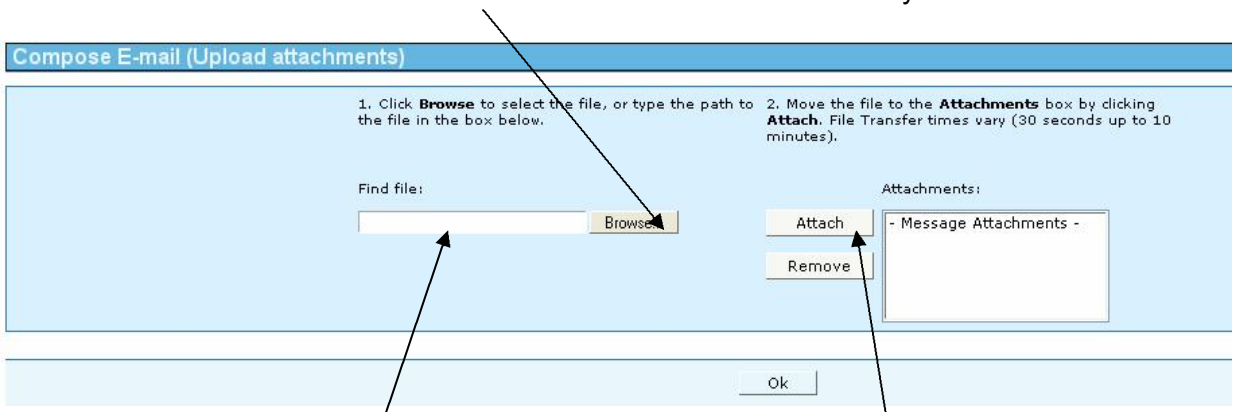
TIPS:

- If you have email addresses stored in the **Address Book**, clicking on the **To:** link will bring up a list.
- If you have created a signature file, you can use the **Add Signature** button to save time. Creating a signature file is covered in the **'Configuration Tab'** section of this manual.

To add an attachment to your email message, click on the **Attach(s)** button



You will see the screen below. Click on the **Browse** button and locate the file you would like to attach.


Compose E-mail (Upload attachments)
1. Click Browse to select the file, or type the path to the file in the box below.
2. Move the file to the Attachments box by clicking Attach. File Transfer times vary (30 seconds up to 10 minutes).
Find file:
Browse...
Attach
Remove
Attachments:
- Message Attachments -
Ok

The location of the file you select will automatically appear. Click on the **Attach** button; the name of the file will appear in the **Attachments** window. Continue to add additional attachments as needed. When all your attachments are listed, click **OK.** You will be returned to the Compose Email screen and will see the name(s) of your attachment(s) in the **Attach** text box located just under the **Subject** text box.

The Address Book Tab

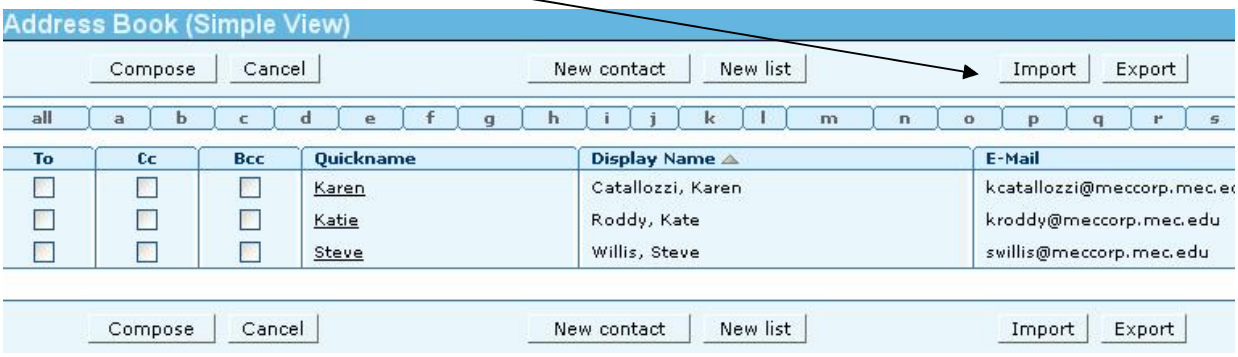
Keeping all your contacts handy will save you lots of time. If you already have contact information stored in another program, you may be able to import it instead of re-entering each one. To do this, you will need **to export your contacts from their current location and then import your contacts to the MECnet Portal.**

To export your contacts:

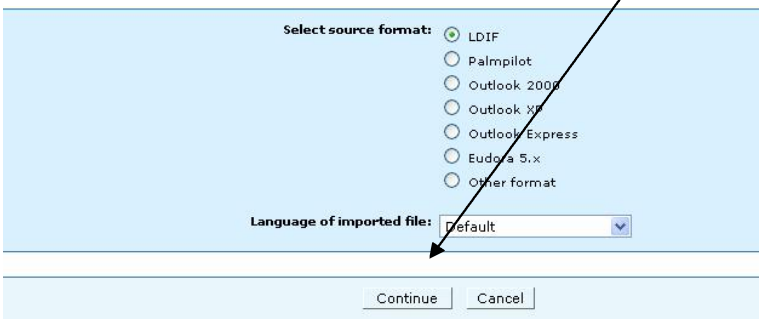
1. Open the application that contains your contacts
2. Locate the Export feature (generally, this will be found under the File option)
3. Exporting will require you to choose a location for the file, a name, and a file type.
    a. Comma separated is usually the best option
    b. The name of the file does not matter
4. Generally, it will work best if you place the file on your desktop, leave the default name as is, and choose the .csv format.

To import your contacts to the Portal:

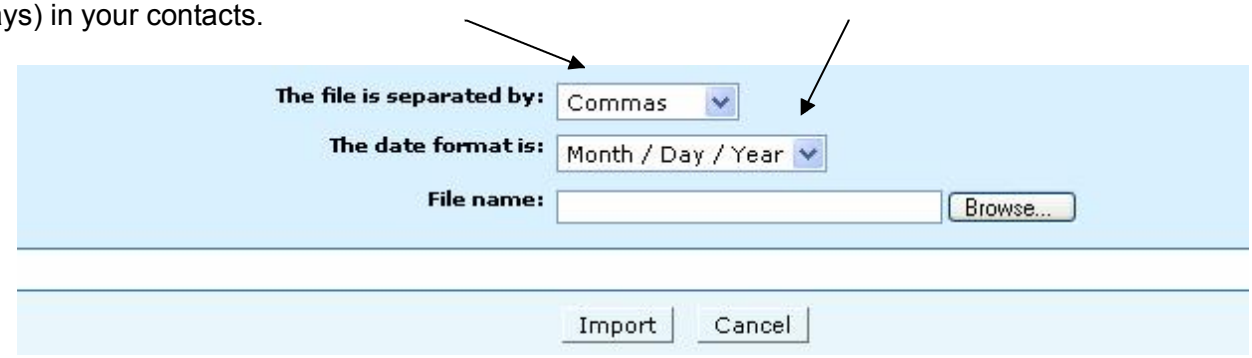
1. Click on Import



2. Select the application you are currently using for your contacts and click on **Continue.**
TIP: If you are using a version of Outlook that is older than Outlook 2000, selecting the Outlook 2000 button may work, but no other option is supported.

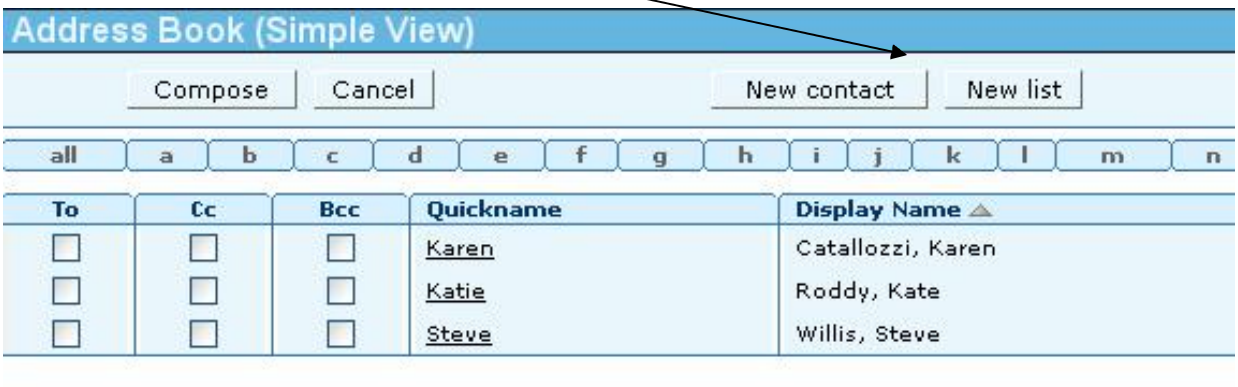


Leave the default option as Commas. You will need to set the date format only if you store dates (i.e. birthdays) in your contacts.



3. Click on the Browse button and locate the .csv file you placed on your desktop
4. Click on Import. (An error message will alert you in the event your contacts were not imported completely or correctly).

TIP: If you frequently send messages to the same group of people, you can create a distribution list. From the Address Book click on **New List** and type in a name for your list. Highlight the names of those to be included and click on 'Add to List>>'. When composing an email, just type the name of the distribution list in the **To:** field.

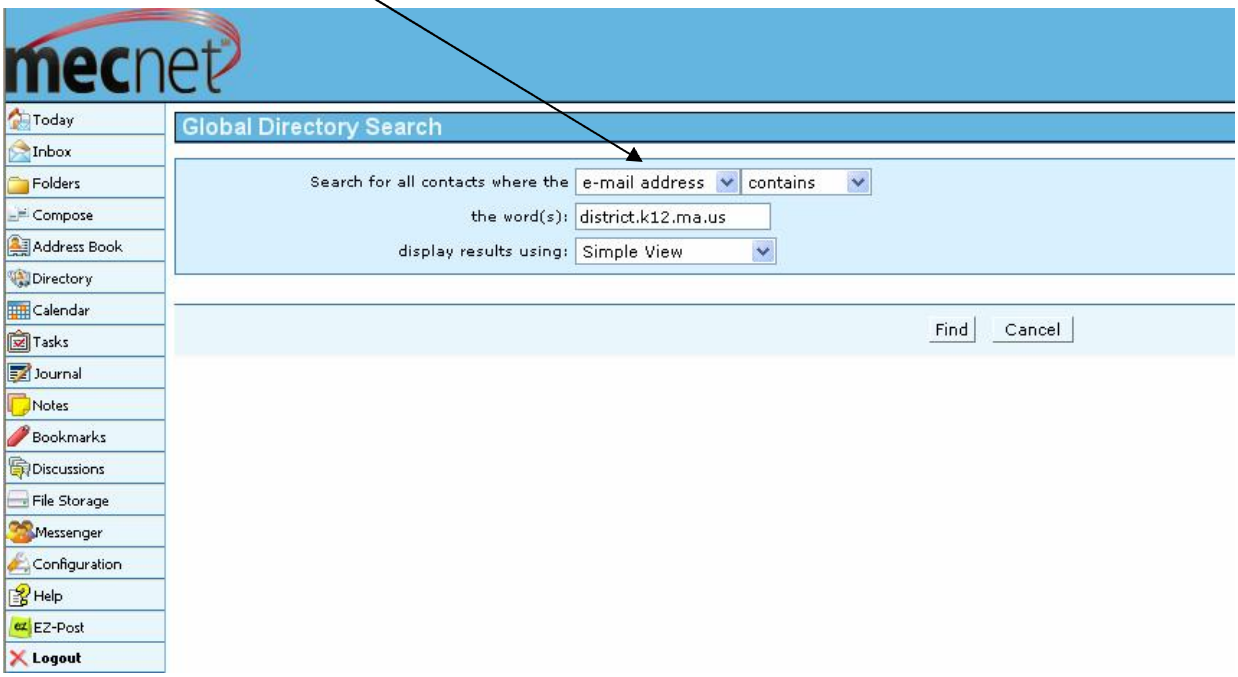


The Directory Tab

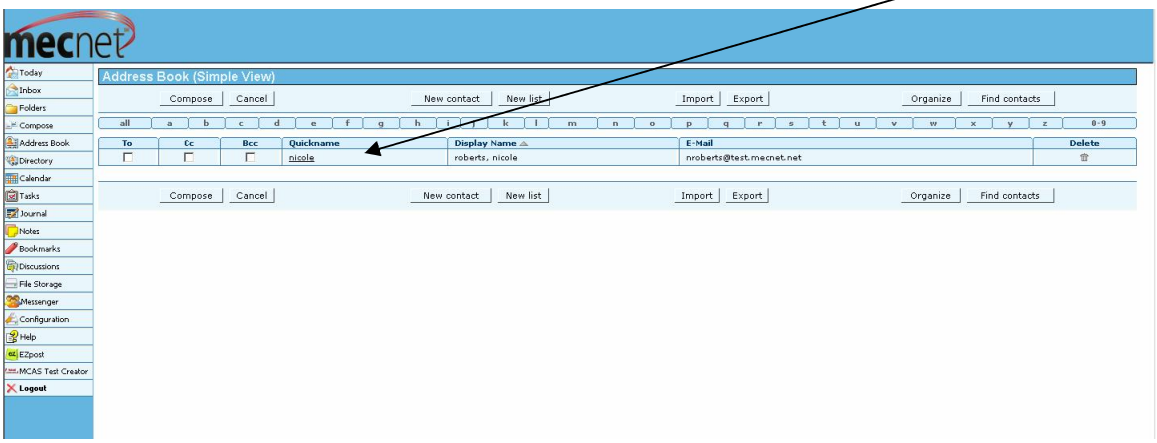
The Directory feature is a searchable database containing the entire list of Portal accounts for your district. Unlike and address book that is updated by each user, the Directory always contains the most current email addresses for everyone in your district.

TIP: The search function requires a minimum of 3 characters in order to perform a search.

TIP: To view a list of everyone in your district, search the email address field using the domain portion of your email address.

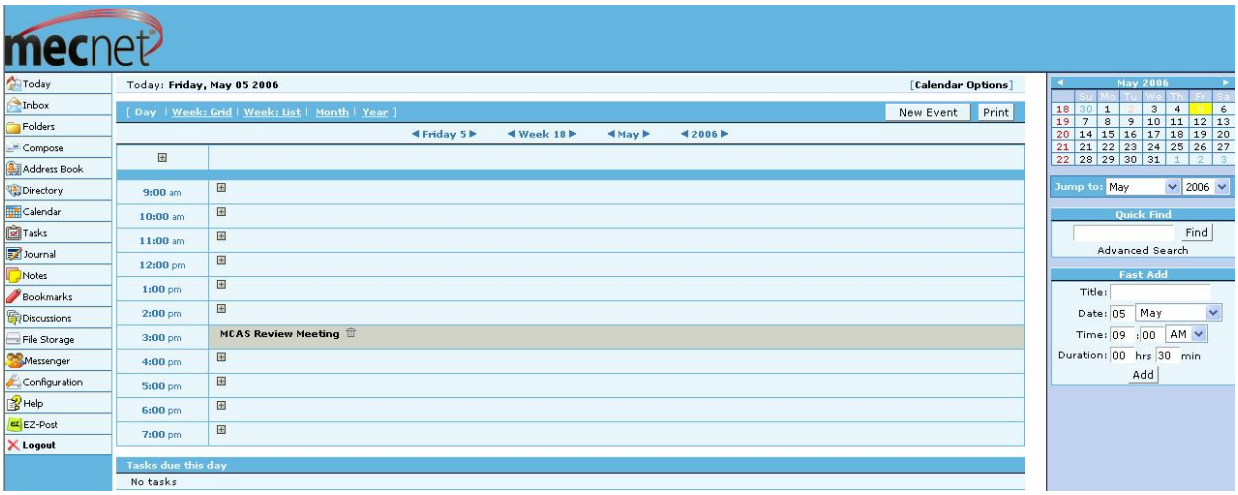


Once you locate an account, you can add that person to your Address Book. Just click on the **Quickname**, and select 'Save'

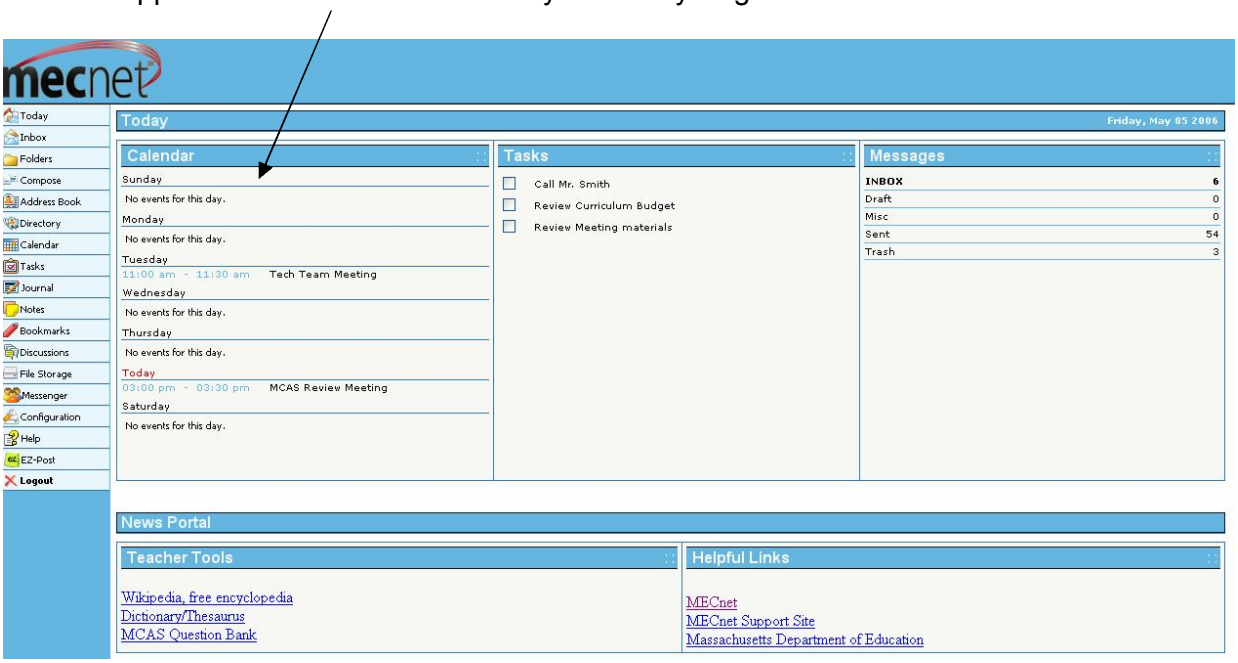


The Calendar Tab

Calendar events (meetings, appointments, etc.) are stored here



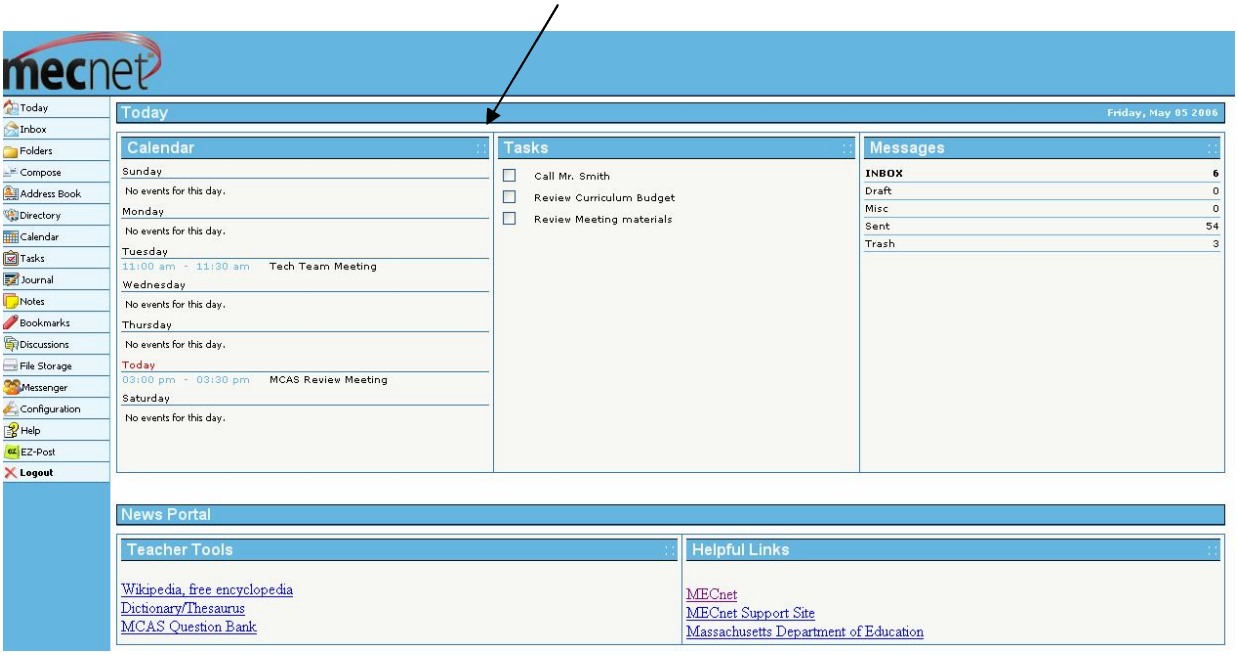
Calendar events appear in the Calendar frame of your Today Page.



The Tasks Tab

The Portal offers three places to record all your reminders: The Task, Journal, and Note tabs. Using any or all of these is a matter of personal choice.

TIP: Only tasks created here will appear in the Today View.



The Journal Tab

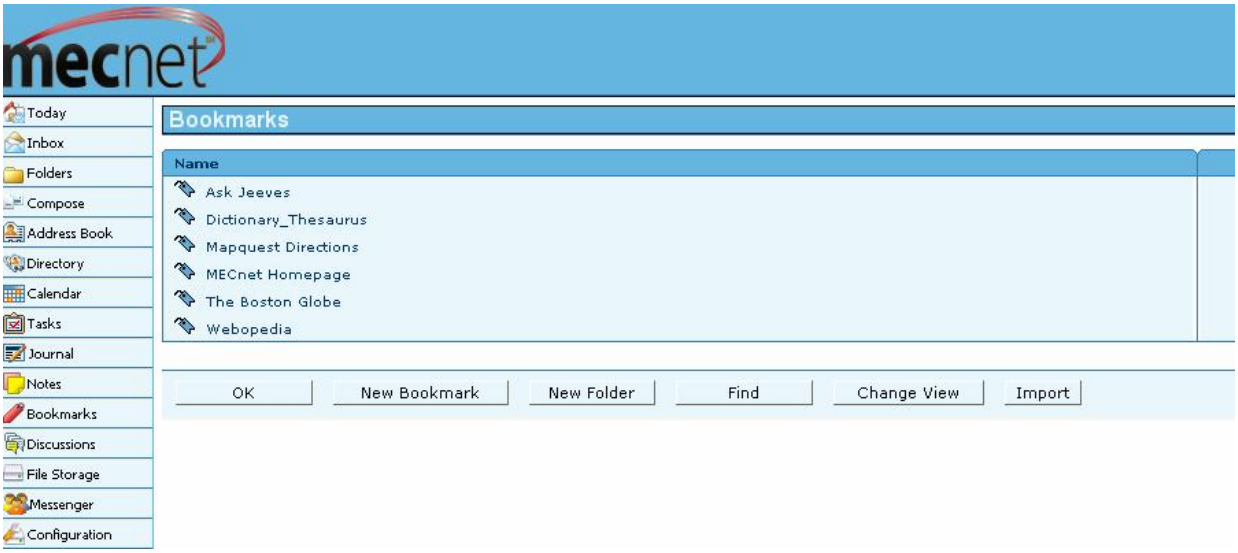
The Journal tab is a bit more structured than either the Tasks or Notes tab. Similar to a diary, you can record daily events/thoughts/ideas that you may want to keep track of, but don't necessarily have a deadline; i.e. communications with parents, staff members, vendors, etc.

The Notes Tab

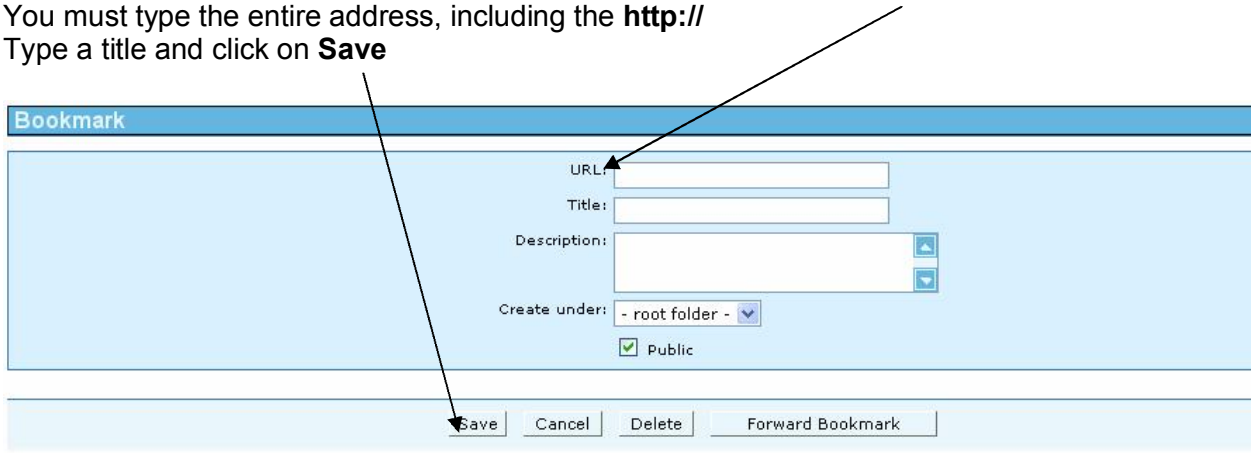
You may want to use Notes to remind yourself of your out-of-school obligations or for reminders that you do want displayed on your Today Page.

The Bookmarks Tab

You may wonder why you would bother creating Bookmarks here since you can easily create them using the Bookmarks/Favorites options in your browser. However, by storing your bookmarks here, they will be available from any computer with Internet access.



To add a bookmark, click on the **New Bookmark** button. Enter the URL of the Bookmark.
You must type the entire address, including the **http://**
Type a title and click on **Save**

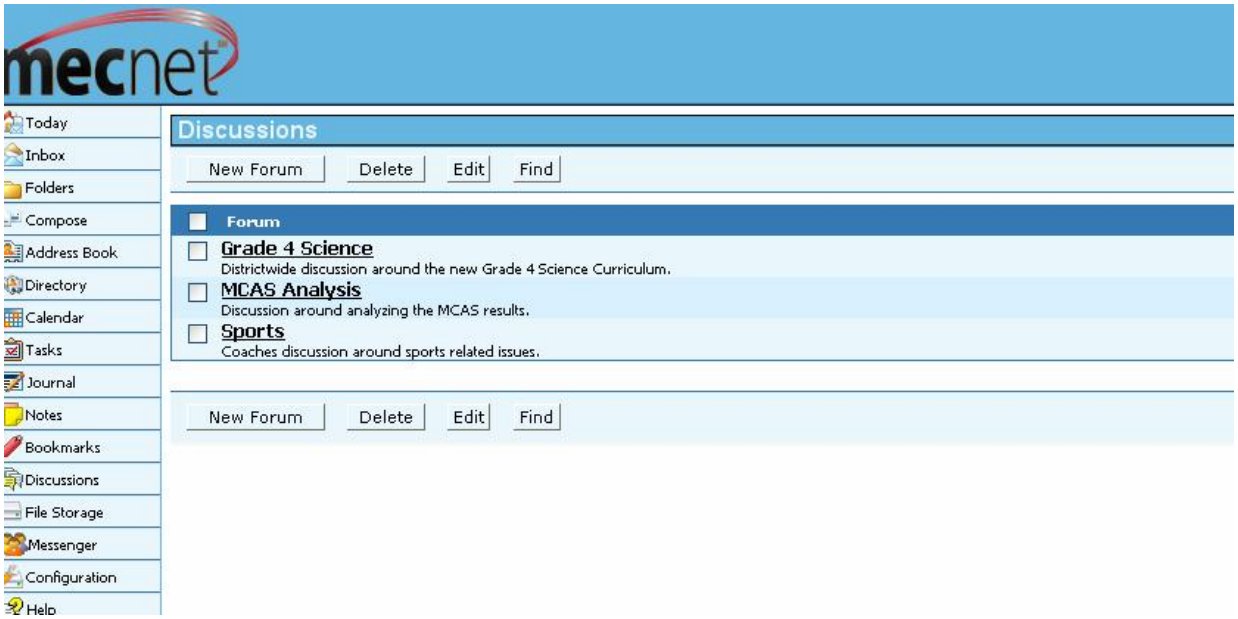


TIPS: If you have bookmarks already stored in a browser, you can import them into the Portal. To do this, click on the Import button. In the confirmation box it will ask you if you want to Export them (don't worry), click OK.

To edit or delete your bookmarks you will need to click on **Change View** and select **detailed**.

The Discussions Tab

Similar to a bulletin board, this tool promotes the use of online discussions within your district.



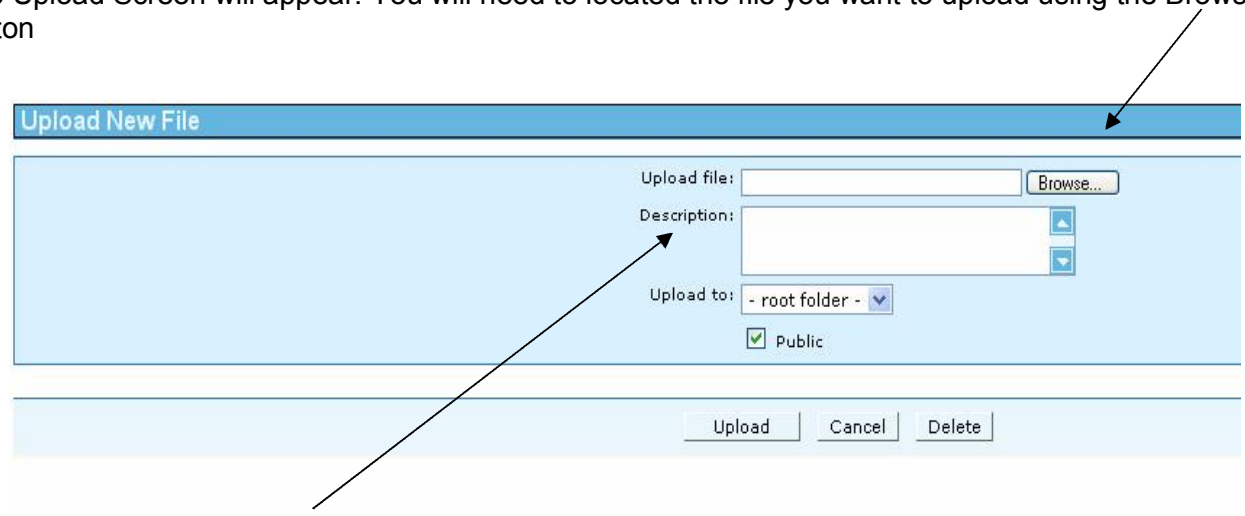
The File Storage Tab

This is an overlooked, but very useful feature! Storing files here gives you virtual hard drive space. Whether you are writing a report or outlining the great American novel, you can store it here and access it from any computer with an Internet connection.

To upload a file to the File Storage area:

1. Click on the Upload button

2. The Upload Screen will appear. You will need to located the file you want to upload using the Browse button



3. Once you select the file, its location will appear automatically.
4. Optionally, you can add a description of the file and upload to a particular folder.
5. Click on the **Upload** button.

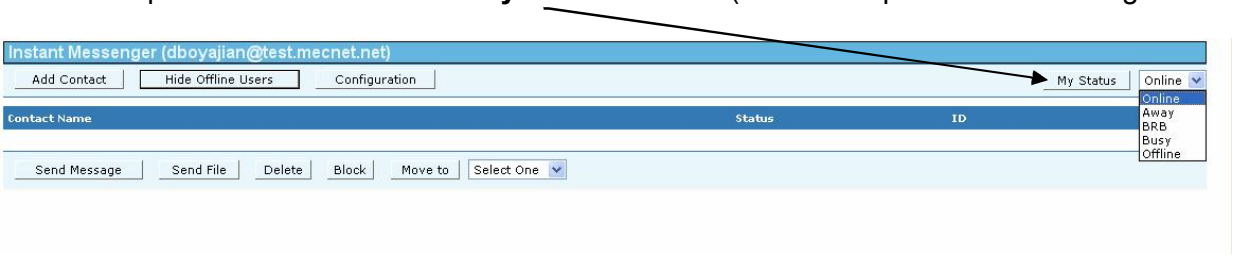
The Messenger Tab

Setting up this portion of your account will allow you chat with other Portal users who are online at the same time you are online. Messaging can be a lot of fun (ask anyone over the age of 7!) but it also has some very practical uses.

In order to chat with people you must first invite them to be part of your list (in the Portal they are called Contacts). Click on the **Add Contact** button. At the user ID prompt type in the complete *email* address of the person you want to invite. The recipient will be able to accept your invitation the next time s/he logs in.

Our messenger is restricted to those who use the MECnet Portal. If you invite someone who is not recognized as a 'portal user', an error message will be displayed. This system is not part of the AOL Instant Messenger service and cannot be used with that service.

TIP: If you are online, but prefer to not be interrupted by messages, you can turn this option off, by selecting Offline from the drop down menu next to the **My Status** button. (The BRB option means Be Right Back).

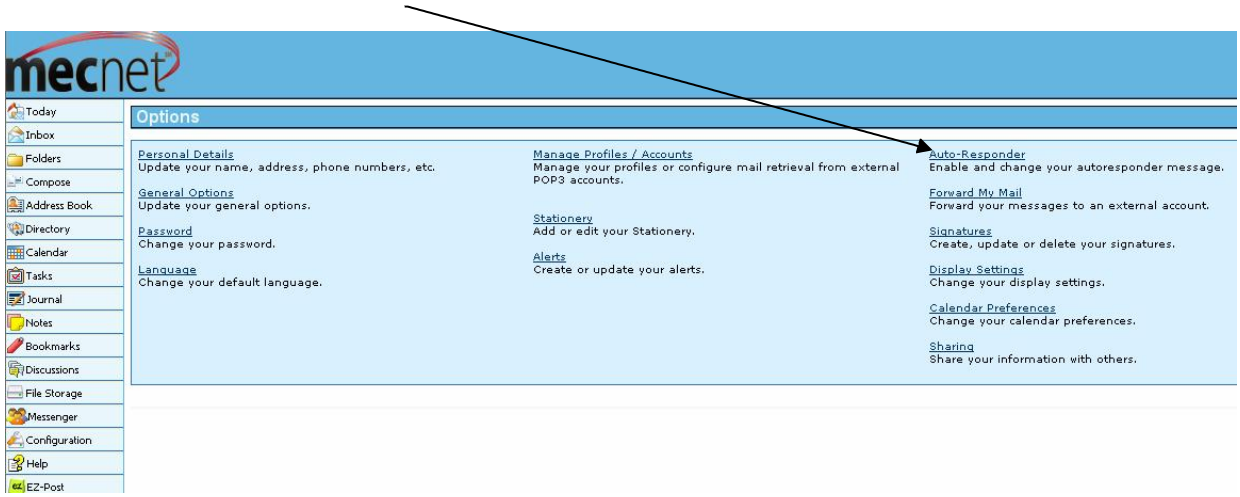


The Configuration Tab

Using this tab, you can customize your email account. Below are our suggestions:

1. Using Auto-Responder

To set an away message when you are out of the office or on vacation. To do this, click on **Configuration, General Options, Auto-Responder**



2. 'Email Sent' confirmation

Each time you send an email, you will get a confirmation that the email has been sent. If you send a lot of emails, you may find this slightly annoying. To turn it off, click on **General Options**, scroll to the very bottom of the page and uncheck "Show a Message sent confirmation page." Click on **Save**.

3. Creating a signature file

You may quickly tire of typing your name and contact information at the end of every email. To avoid this, click on **Signatures** and **New**. You will be need to create a signature name and then type your name and contact information as you would like it to appear in your emails.

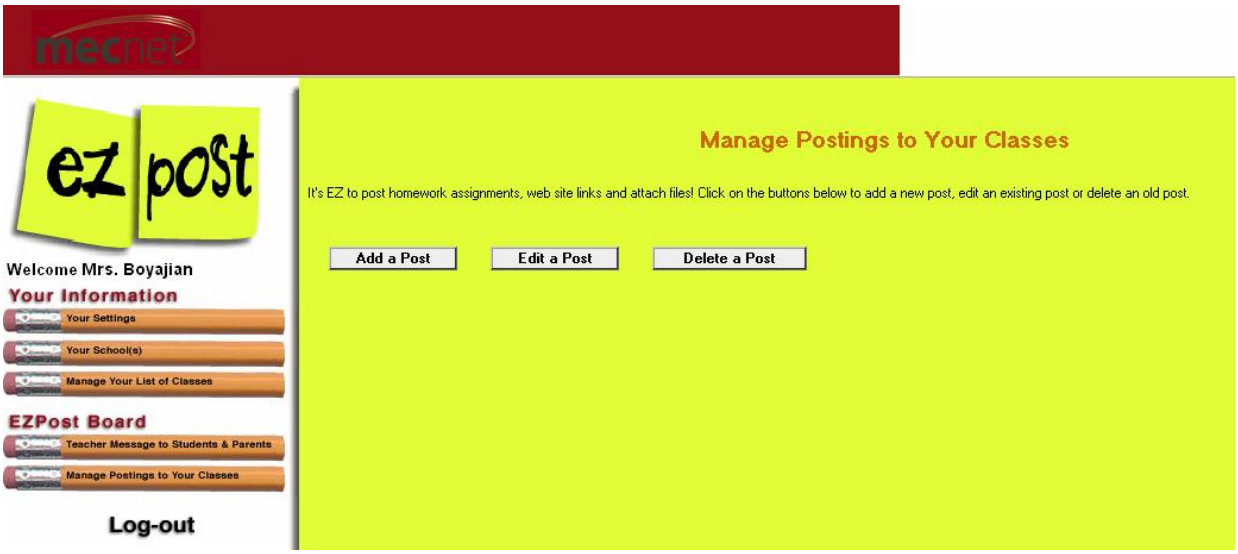
TIP: when using the signature file, you should get in the habit of adding it to your emails before you start typing your message. If you type the message first, then add the signature file, it will appear at the very top of your message.

The Help Tab

This is another overlooked, but valuable tab. The Help tab will answer most of your additional questions and explain some of the advanced features of the MECnet Portal. It is well organized with straightforward, easy-to-understand explanations.

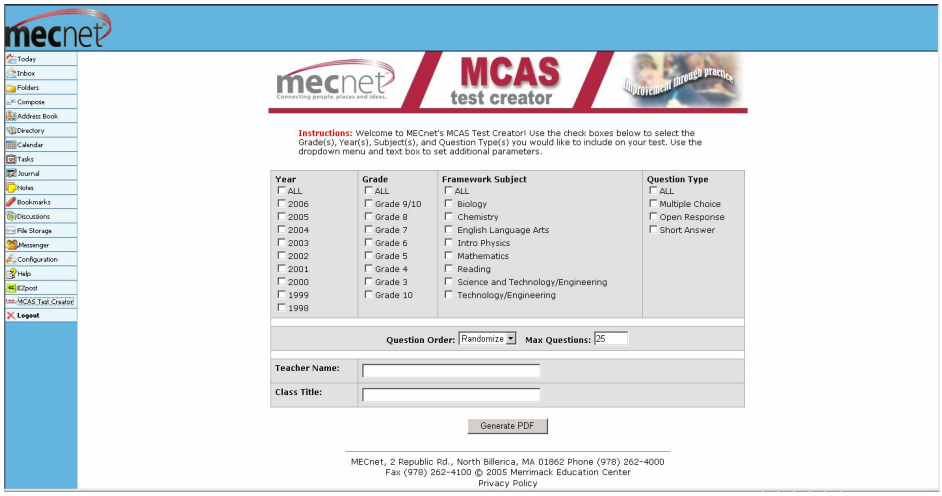
The EZPost Tab

Ezpost is a web-based homework-posting site for teachers. If your district is currently participating, this link will be active. For additional documentation on EZPost, go to http://support.mecnet.net (click on the 'Download' link located on the left hand side of your screen). This feature requires an EZPost account to be setup by MEC. Please contact your district technology director for details.


mecnet
ez post
Welcome Mrs. Boyajian
Your Information
Your Settings
Your School(s)
Manage Your List of Classes
EZPost Board
Teacher Message to Students & Parents
Manage Postings to Your Classes
Log-out
Manage Postings to Your Classes
It's EZ to post homework assignments, web site links and attach files! Click on the buttons below to add a new post, edit an existing post or delete an old post.
Add a Post
Edit a Post
Delete a Post

The MCAS Test Creator Tab

This application allows teachers to quickly and easily create MCAS Practice Tests using the publicly released MCAS questions. Tests can be for multiple grade levels, numerous framework/subjects, and a variety of question types including multiple choice, open response, and short answer. Also included is an answer key for the teachers.



The Logout Tab

A self-explanatory tab, but it is important to logout each time you are finished (as opposed to exiting your browser). Logging out ensures that your email/files/preferences are 'cleaned up' and stored correctly. This will help ensure that your account will not be corrupted.

FAQ's (Frequently Asked Questions)

Inbox Tab

- **Q:** Can I change the order in which my mail appears so that the most recent messages are at the top?

  A: Yes. Click on the **Configuration Tab**. Select **Display Settings**; choose 'Date (Ascendant)' from the drop down menu next to 'Inbox Sorting'. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click on **Save.**

Calendar

- **Q:** Can I change the calendar clock to 'AM/PM' style instead of the 24-hour clock?

  A: Yes. From the **Calendar Tab**, click on **Calendar Options**, then on **Calendar Preferences**. Be sure the 'Don't use AM/PM' box is unselected. Click on **Save.**

Bookmarks

- **Q:** I can't seem to edit or delete my bookmarks.

  A: To edit or delete your bookmarks you will need to scroll to the bottom of the Bookmarks screen, click on **Change View** and select **detailed**.

Messenger

- **Q:** The 'Add Contact' option asks for the 'User ID' of the person I want to add. Is this their username or email address?

  A: To invite someone to join you in MECnet Portal Messenger, you need to invite this users complete email address. (You will only be able to IM those who use the MEC portal).

- **Q: Where can I get additional help?**

  A: If you have additional questions that have not been covered in this user's guide, please see the Help section of the Portal. As always, feel free to contact MECnet Support by email at: support@mecnet.net or by telephone at: 978.262.4000, option 1 (Technical Support).